# SHERIFF-CORONER

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

STANLEY SNIFF, Sheriff-Coroner

15 MAY 27 AM 8-40

Allison Hunt, M.D. Forensic Pathologist

## AUTOPSY PROTOCOL

NAME OF DECEDENT: LEWIS, STEVEN (U62-15)

**FILE NUMBER:** 2015-02174

## **FINAL DIAGNOSES:**

- I. Terminal Event: The decedent, a 51 year-old, male was reportedly arguing with a female and shots were reported being fired. Officers arrived and pursued Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lewis entered someone else's home and reportedly shot himself with a shotgun.
- II. Post-Mortem Examination:
  - A. Shotgun wound of head and neck:
    - 1) Shotgun wound of submental area.
    - 2) Multiple pellets are recovered from the face, base of the skull and brain.
    - 3) Path of the projectiles: Right to left, front to back and upward.
  - B. Gunshot wound of left lower abdomen:
    - 1) Projectile enters the left lower abdomen and exits the right buttock.
    - 2) No projectile or projectile fragments are recovered from this wound.
    - 3) Path of projectile: Front to back, left to right and slightly downward.
  - C. Scattered cutaneous abrasions and contusions.
  - D. Trace evidence: Hands were processed at the scene.
  - E. Non-traumatic findings:
    - 1) Hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease
      - a. Cardiomegaly with biventricular hypertrophy.
      - b. Critical coronary atherosclerosis.
      - c. Atherosclerosis, mild, aorta.
    - 2) Hepatosteatosis.
  - F. Toxicology: please refer to Toxicology Report.

## **CAUSE OF DEATH:** SHOTGUN WOUND OF HEAD AND NECK

"I hereby certify that I, Allison Hunt, M.D., Forensic Pathologist, have performed an autopsy on the body of Steven Lewis, on February 24, 2015, commencing at 12:45 p.m. and completed at 2:57 p.m., at the Perris Office of the Riverside County Sheriff-Coroner." The body is received in a sealed body bag (red seal "0747469") and with a white tag containing the inscription "2015-02174".

## **ATTENDEES:**

Riverside Police Department: Rick Wheeler

Coroner Technician: Barbara Peccia Forensic Technician: Tara Mendoza

### **CLOTHING:**

The decedent is clad in a black ¾ length sleeve shirt, jeans with a navy belt, teal boxer briefs and gray sneakers and gray socks. The right sneaker and sock have been removed for placement of the toe tag.

## TRACE EVIDENCE:

Multiple pellets are recovered from the face, base of the skull and brain, and are submitted to detectives at autopsy.

## RADIOLOGY:

LODOX scan reveals multiple small pellets in the head. No projectile or projectile fragments are seen in the abdominal or right buttock area.

## **EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:**

The body is that of a well-developed, well-nourished, 6 foot 1 inch, 190 pound (BMI =  $25.1 \text{ kg/m}^2$ ), white male who appears the reported age of 51 years. The body is refrigerated. Rigor mortis is fully developed and symmetric in the major muscle groups. Livor mortis is fixed over the posterior aspect of the body except over pressure points.

The head and neck have injuries as described below. The scalp hair is black-gray. The irides are brown. No teeth are identified. The uninjured right upper alveolar ridge is edentulous.

The chest is symmetric. The abdomen has injuries as described below. The external genitalia are atraumatic and those of a normal adult circumcised male. The testes are within the scrotum.

The upper and lower extremities are symmetric, normally developed, and have no palpable fractures. The length from the right axilla to the distal end of the right middle finger is 23 7/8 inches. The bilateral hands are bagged and sealed. Nail clipping and gunshot residue testing were performed at the scene. A tan identification tag on the right great toe has the inscription "2015-02174".

The posterior aspect of the body has injuries as described below.

## **EVIDENCE OF MEDICAL INTERVENTION:**

None.

## **IDENTIFYING MARKS AND SCARS:**

A polychromatic tattoo of a rose, heart and multiple banners with the inscriptions "Alex", "Nicole", "Isabel", "Felicia" and "Andrea" is on the right upper outer arm. A polychromatic tattoo of a cross, prayer hands and leaves is on the left upper outer arm.

## **EVIDENCE OF INJURY**

### **HEAD AND NECK:**

A gaping, approximately 15 centimeter by 5.5 centimeter, shotgun entrance wound is located on the submental area of the chin and neck extending laterally onto the right neck and upward onto the left face and cheek. Re-approximation of the wound reveals an approximately 3.0 x 3.0 centimeter, entrance shotgun wound of the submental area of the chin. A 2.0 x 1.0 centimeter area of soot deposition is in the 7 o'clock position of the wound. Multiple lacerations extend from the wound in the 7 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock and 2 o'clock positions. The largest skin tear extends onto the mid aspect of the left cheek. There is diffuse destruction of the submental region of the chin and neck with diffuse destruction of the mandible, left aspect of the maxilla, and base of the skull.

The projectiles enter the submental region, pass through the mandible, mid/anterior aspect of the tongue, left face, base of the skull and into the cerebrum.

Associated with this gunshot wound are multiple laceration involving the left aspect of the face, left aspect of the lip, right aspect of the upper lip, small lacerations on the left aspect of the nose and medial maxillary area of the face, and small lacerations of the bridge of the nose and medial right and left epicanthal areas. The hyoid bone is fractured in multiple areas and the thyroid cartilage has a large midline fracture. There is diffuse destruction of the left cheek area and left globe. The base of the skull has multiple skull fractures of the bilateral petrous ridges and bilateral anterior fossae. A linear fracture extends onto the right parietal bone. Radiating fractures extend from the left base of the skull onto the left frontal temporoparietal region. The cerebrum has a thin coating of

liquid subdural blood of the left cerebral hemisphere and diffuse subarachnoid hemorrhage, greater of the left cerebral hemisphere. The cerebrum has multiple contusions, greatest of the left inferior frontal and temporal lobes. The cerebellum and brainstem are intact.

Multiple pellet fragments are recovered from the left cheek area, base of the skull and cerebrum.

The path of the shotgun wound is right to left, front to back and upward.

## GUNSHOT WOUND OF LEFT LOWER QUADRANT OF THE ABDOMEN:

On the left lower quadrant of the abdomen, 32 inches below the top of the head and 3  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches left of the midline, is an entrance gunshot wound. It is a 1.0 x 0.6 centimeter gunshot wound with a red abrasion collar which measures up to 0.5 centimeters in the 3 o'clock position, 0.5 centimeters in the 6 o'clock position, 0.1 centimeters in the 9 o'clock position, and 0.2 centimeters in the 12 o'clock position. A fragment of denim consistent with the decedent's pants is embedded within this entrance wound. No soot, stippling or muzzle impression is on the adjacent skin.

The projectile passes through the skin and soft tissue of the left lower abdominal wall, grazes the descending colon, perforates the bladder, and exits the right buttock.

No projectile or projectile fragments are recovered from this wound.

Associated with this gunshot wound is minimal hemorrhage of the left lower abdominal wall, a small amount of free urine within the peritoneal cavity, and minimal hemorrhage within the soft tissue and musculature of the lower abdomen and peritoneal cavity. No major vessels are injured.

The path of the projectile is front to back, left to right and downward.

### OTHER CUTANEOUS INJURIES:

· 25.

Scattered small red abrasions are on the right lateral neck. There is no underlying hemorrhage of the sternocleidomastoid muscle. Small orange-red abrasion is on the left lateral chest. Small red abrasion is on the dorsal aspect of the left third finger. A blue-red abraded contusion is on the medial aspect of the left thigh. A small red abrasion with surrounding red contusion is on the left medial malleolus.

### **INTERNAL EXAMINATION:**

The previously described injuries will not be further delineated.

The brain is 1580 grams. The cerebral gyri and sulci are edematous. The cerebrum has a well-demarcated gray-white interface and no identifiable tumors. The circle of Willis is complete, has minimal atherosclerosis and no malformation. The brainstem and cerebellum are symmetrical.

The anterior muscles of the neck are soft and red-brown. The larynx and trachea are lined by intact, tan mucosa. The cricoid cartilage is intact. The thyroid gland is tan-red and has no discrete masses.

The anterior chest wall has no abnormalities. The bilateral, pleural cavities have no adhesions and no abnormal fluid collections

The 650 gram right lung and 650 gram left lung are normally lobated. The visceral pleural surfaces have a moderate amount of anthracotic pigment deposition. The major bronchi are patent and the mucosa is tan and intact. The parenchyma is purple-red, exudes a moderate amount of pink tinged fluid, and has no palpable consolidations or tumors. The perihilar lymph nodes are mildly enlarged and anthracotic. The vasculature is patent.

The pericardial sac is intact and contains a physiologic amount of thin, yellow fluid. The 480 gram heart has an increased amount of adipose tissue. The coronary arteries arise normally and have a right dominant configuration. The coronary ostia are patent. The left anterior descending coronary artery has up to 85% stenosis by multifocal areas of atherosclerosis. The right coronary artery has up to 50% stenosis by multifocal areas of atherosclerosis. The left circumflex coronary artery has up to 30% stenosis by focal atherosclerosis. The atria are of normal size and the fossa ovalis is fused. The atrial appendages are free of antemortem thrombi. The endocardium of the left ventricular outflow tract has a mild increase of subendocardial fibrosis. The myocardium is dark red-brown and has no areas of fibrosis or hemorrhage. The left and right ventricles are 1.7 and 0.5 centimeters in thickness, respectively. The mitral valve is mildly thickened. The chordae tendineae are mildly shortened and thickened. The aorta branches normally and has mild atherosclerosis.

The 1640 gram liver has a smooth and transparent capsule. The yellow-tan, greasy parenchyma has a homogeneous lobular pattern with no lesions or nodules. Approximately 50 milliliters of green-brown bile and no calculi are within the gallbladder. The vessels of the porta hepatis are normal. The pancreas has normally lobulated, red-tan, parenchyma with no foci of calcification. The 170 gram spleen has an intact, tan, wrinkled capsule. The parenchyma is maroon, boggy and without lesions.

The esophagus is normal and the gastroesophageal junction is well demarcated. The stomach contains 125 milliliters of green-brown liquid and scant food particles. The gastric mucosa is tan, smooth, and has a normal pattern of rugal folds. The pylorus and duodenum have no abnormalities. The small intestine, colon and rectum are of normal caliber and have no palpable masses. The vermiform appendix is normal.

The adrenal glands are normal. The 130 gram right kidney and 130 gram left kidney have smooth cortical surfaces. The renal parenchyma is tan-red and has well-defined corticomedullary junctions. The renal arteries are patent. The pelves and ureters are patent, free of calculi, and of normal caliber. The ureters enter the bladder normally. The urinary bladder contains no urine. The bladder mucosa is smooth, and white-tan.

The prostate gland has tan, rubbery parenchyma without lesions. The testes are normal.

There are no fractures of the clavicles, ribs or sternum.

## TOXICOLOGY:

Please refer to Toxicology Report.

Allison Hunt, M.D. Forensic Pathologist

Date

AH/cg 05/20/2015

Coroner Investigation



MODE Suicide

CASE # 201502174

STATUS Coroner Review

DEPUTY Nancy Rissi

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Coroner Investigation



**MODE** Suicide

CASE# 201502174

STATUS Coroner Review DEPUTY Nancy Rissi

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Coroner Investigation



MODE Suicide CASE# 201502174

STATUS Coroner Review

**DEPUTY Nancy Rissi** 

## Coroner Investigation

03/30/2015

Report of Death to Coroner:

On 02/23/2015, at 2315 hours, Sergeant Banks, of the Riverside Police Department, called to report the officer involved death of an unidentified male. A Unident number U62-15 was generated for temporary identification. The decedent, U62-15, was later positively identified and hereafter referred to as, fifty-one year old, Steven Robert Lewis, via fingerprint comparison.

I departed the Riverside County Sheriff Coroner's office located in Perris at 2345 hours, with Coroner Sergeant R. Escobar, who notified Coroner Lt. A. Smith. I arrived to the briefing area, which was located at the intersection of Park Ave. and Pleasant St., in the city of Riverside. I arrived on 02/24/2015, at 0010 hours, and contacted Detective G. Rowe, who provided me with the following information. The information provided is subject to change as the investigation was ongoing, witnesses had not yet been interviewed and further details had not yet been collected.

According to Detective Rowe, a call was placed to Riverside Police Department dispatch from a reporting party (RP), who lived at 2851 Prospect Ave. in the city of Riverside. The RP reported a verbal argument was heard from 2865 Prospect Ave., but a short time later, a gunshot was heard, from possibly a smaller caliber gun, coming from that residence. Officers S. Weddle and D. Macias were dispatched to 2865 Prospect Ave. d arrived at the residence. The officers approached the residence and as they were approaching the front door, they heard something towards the rear of the residence. One of the officers approached the side of the residence and saw a male, later identified as Lewis, running towards the back of the residence. Officers Weddle and Officer Macias approached the left side of the residence and saw a male go into a shed behind the house. Once they arrived at the rear of the residence, they saw Lewis with a shotgun. Lewis pointed the shotgun towards Officer Weddle and fired his shotgun. Officer Weddle discharged his weapon towards Lewis, but Lewis ran from Officer Weddle and towards the rear of the property. While running, Lewis turned towards Officer Weddle and Macias, and again fired his shotgun towards Officer Weddle. Officers Weddle and Macias discharged their duty weapons at Lewis, as Lewis was running away from them with the shotgun in his hands. Lewis jumped the fence, located at the rear of his property, and into the alley that runs parallel between Prospect Ave. and Pleasant St. and headed westbound. Officer E. Romero arrived to the area and as Officer Romero was pulling up near the alley, Lewis fired his shotgun at Officer Romero, who took cover. Lewis continued through the alley, jumped a fence of an unknown residence, and headed towards Pleasant Ave. Once on Pleasant Ave., he headed eastbound on Pleasant. Officer Romero attempted to follow Lewis, but lost sight of him.

Lewis entered a residence, located at 2786 Pleasant Ave., with his shotgun. The manner in which he entered the residence was unknown at the time of this briefing. The residents of 2786 Pleasant Ave. reported Lewis was manipulating the shotgun, possibly loading it, as he was entering the house, and saw him raise the shotgun towards his mouth as he entered a bedroom. The residents ran out of the bedroom and as they were running towards the rear of the house, they heard a gunshot, but did not see Lewis shoot mself. The residents ran out of the home and flagged down the officers.

Officers were flagged down and multiple RPD officers entered the residence and saw Lewis with an

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apparent shotgun wound to his head. Detective Rowe also stated Lewis may have been struck by one of the officers during the exchange of gunfire prior to Lewis entering the residence on 2786 Pleasant Ave. RPD officers returned to Lewis' residence to ensure there were no other injured parties. Detective Rowe reported Lewis was pronounced dead by officers who were on scene, based on obvious signs of death, but were unable to provide the officer's name.

Upon speaking to multiple additional officers who were on scene as the investigation progressed, I was informed Lewis entered the residence located at 2786 Pleasant Ave. via the open garage door. Lewis entered the garage, shut the garage door behind him and entered the home via the pedestrian door from the garage.

RPD Officers C. Camp, J. Pap, C. Ouk, and R. Serrato entered the residence upon learning Lewis was in the home and found Lewis in a bedroom, with an obvious gunshot wound. Medical aid was requested and Riverside Fire Department arrived to the scene. Riverside Fire Department personnel entered the residence, medically assessed Lewis and pronounced him dead at 2157 hours, citing obvious signs of death (presence of brain matter to the left side of his dead); by Paramedic Miguel Ahmumada.

It was also reported Lewis told the occupants of the bedroom he entered, that they may want to leave the room because they did not want to see what he was going to do to himself.

Refer to Riverside Police Department, report # P150280755.

#### Scene Description:

The residence, located at 2786 Pleasant Ave. is a single story residence with an attached garage. I observed Lewis in a rear bedroom with a shotgun next to him during a brief walk-through.

I was also escorted to the portion of the alley that intersects with Grove Ave. Since the scene had not yet been processed, a walk through was not performed.

Please refer to Deputy Coroner R. Laster's supplemental report for additional scene description.

Medical and Social Histories:

Unknown

Medications:

Unknown

**Documentation:** 

60 total photographs were taken of the scene and of the body.

applemental Information:

Please refer to Deputy Coroner Laster's supplemental report for the body examination.

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### Cause of Death Statement:

On February 24, 2015 an autopsy was performed by Dr. Allison Hunt, pathologist. Toxicological tests were also ordered. Please refer to the Administrative Deputy Coroner's supplemental report for the cause, manner and mode of death.

Report prepared by: N. Rissi

**Coroner Investigation** 



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## **Coroner Supplemental**

02/24/2015

### Supplemental Information:

On 02/24/2015, at 0250 hours, Deputy Coroner Nancy Rissi asked me to respond to 2786 Pleasant Street, in the city of Riverside, and complete an examination on the remains of Mr. Steven Lewis (Lewis). Lewis was reportedly involved in a shooting with Riverside Police Department (RPD) officers and subsequently shot himself.

I responded with Coroner Technician Ivy Zandoval, who also transported the remains of Lewis to the Forensic Center in Perris. I responded from the Perris Forensic Center at 0309 hours, and arrived on scene at 0331 hours. I contacted RPD Investigator Rowe, who had no further information then what was previously reported to Deputy Coroner Rissi.

### <u>Details/Scene Description:</u>

The incident residence was a single-family detached home located on a residential street. I entered into a front living room area that lead into a kitchen, back out to a sitting area and then to a back bedroom. The bedroom at the end of the hallway was reportedly a child's bedroom. The room was very dark as the only lighting came from a television. There were two beds in the unkempt room. Lewis was lying on the ground with his lower body pointing towards the bedroom doorway. Next to the bed, directly inside of the door on e ground, was a Maverick Model 88, 12 gauge shotgun, partially underneath some bedding that was hanging off of the bed. The serial number on the weapon was MV83441T. Investigator Rowe informed me that the weapon was likely not registered. There was one spent 12-gauge shotgun shell in the chamber. There was one unspent shell lying on the ground near the weapon and two unspent shells in a magazine that was affixed to the weapon.

Lewis was lying in a puddle of blood that was coming from his neck area. He had major trauma to the neck area causing tissue and teeth to spray on the walls and bedding throughout the bedroom. I proceeded to photograph and examine Lewis.

### **Deputy Coroner's External Examination of Remains:**

The body was that of a male identified as Steven Lewis, a 51 year-old resident of Riverside, by fingerprint comparison.

#### a) Body Position:

Lewis was lying on his back. His head was slightly turned towards his left shoulder. The arms were to his side and were slightly spread outwards away from his body. The legs were bent at the knee with his left foot resting on the ground.

### b) Clothing Description:

He was wearing a black shirt, blue belt, blue jeans, white socks and gray shoes.

#### c) Post Mortem Changes:

Rigor mortis was present to the extremities and difficult to break. Lividity was present and fixed to the

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posterior portion of his body.

d) Ambient temperature and method used: He was cold to the touch.

e) Identifying marks, scars, tattoos: None noted.

### f) Trauma:

He had major trauma to the underside of his neck, with nasal fractures and his left eye blew out. He had a small round defect to the left side lower pelvic area and a round defect to the right lower buttock area. The rest of his remains appeared atraumatic.

### g) Other Observations:

He did not have petechia to the right eye. I located several pieces of teeth and plastic dentures. He had a small abrasion to the left upper chest area. He had small abrasions to the left upper thigh area.

### Documentation:

took forty-eight digital color photographs of the scene and the decedent. I collected personal property and was inventoried on coroner receipts #52334 and 52336. At 0348 hours, I collected a Gunshot Residue (GSR) sample from the left hand and at 0349 hours, the right. At 0350 hours, I collected nail clipping from the left hand and at 0353 hours, from the right hand. At 0356 hours, I obtained a strip of all right thumb print to be later sent to CAL-Id for confirmation of identification. At 0357 hours, I placed the right hand into a brown paper back to secure and trace evidence and at 0358 hours, the left. At 0415 hours, I collected a bi-femoral blood sample from the remains. At 0418 hours, I placed coroner identification tag #12649, to the lower extremity. He was then placed into a body bag. The blood collected and any visible tissue and teeth located were placed inside of the body bag. At 0426 hours, an informational bag tag and coroner seal #0747469, was placed on the body bag to secure the remains. I departed the scene with the remains at 0445 hours.

At the Forensic Center the thumb print obtained was scanned to CAL-Id to confirm identification. This report will be forwarded to Deputy Rissi for her records.

Report Prepared by: Rosie R. Laster

Deputy Coroner, ID#N4114

Date: 02/24/2015

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## Coroner Supplemental

06/29/2015

Supplemental Information:

On 06/25/2015, Riverside County Sheriff-Coroner Stan Sniff conducted a Coroner's Review of the death of Steven Lewis. After the facts were presented, Sheriff-Coroner Sniff certified the cause, mode and manner of death.

The cause of death was determined to be: Shotgun Wound of Head and Neck

The mode of death has been determined to be: Shot self with 12 gauge shotgun.

The manner of death has been classified as: Suicide.

Report prepared by: Katie Cohen, #N4820